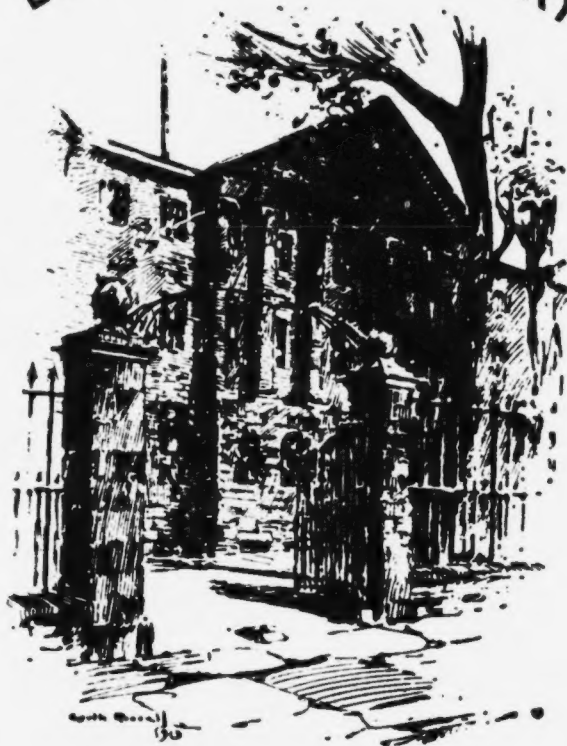


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AN ADDRESS
DESIGNED TO AFFORD A BRIEF STATEMENT
OF THE
SCRIPTURE WARRANT
FOR
TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES,
AND OF THE
CHRISTIAN DUTY OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

PREPARED BY
THE REV. MESSRS. KEIL AND PATTERSON,
AND ADOPTED AND PUBLISHED FOR CIRCULATION
BY THE SYNOD
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF NOVA SCOTIA.

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Halifax, Poplar Grove Church, July 5, 1849.

Half-Past 9 O'clock, P. M.

The Synod after a Lecture read by the Rev. John Campbell, "On the causes which have hitherto retarded the progress of the Reformation," met and was constituted.

Present as at last Sederunt. Read the Minutes of last Sederunt. On motion of Rev. James Ross, took up the subject of Temperance. Read a Memorial from the Session of Truro, on the subject. Read also the Address prepared by the Rev. Messrs. Keir and Patterson, on the same subject, by the appointment of Synod.

Agreed that the Address be received, with a strong expression of the Synod's approval of the diligence of the Committee, and that five hundred copies be Printed for circulation, under the superintendence of the following Committee:—Rev. Messrs. Baxter, Bayne, and Watson. Mr. Baxter, Convener.

Ordered, that the Memorial from the Session of Truro be remitted to Presbyteries to consider and report at next meeting of Synod.

Extracted from the Minutes of Synod,

PETER G. MCGREGOR, *Synod Clerk.*

1929

ADDRESS, &c.

THE Christian is not permitted by his Divine Master to neglect any duty ; but is enjoined to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. One class of duties, however, may sometimes claim more of our attention than others. We are most loudly called upon to oppose that sin which is most extensively prevalent ; and, especially, if it threaten to overwhelm society.—Who does not see that this is now the case ? Has not Intemperance come in like a flood ? Does it not threaten universal ruin ? Has it not spread untold misery through families, neighbourhoods and nations ? Has it not entered even the hallowed precincts of the sanctuary, and cast down many who seemed to be steadily walking in the way to Heaven. Surely, then, it is especially the duty of those who profess to follow the Saviour, strenuously to resist the progress of this enemy. Suffer, therefore, the word of exhortation from those, who watch for your souls as they that must give account.

By what means, you may perhaps ask, is the progress of Intemperance to be arrested ? Some will say that nothing more is necessary than to be moderate in the use of intoxicating liquors.—To this we reply, that moderate drinking is the very source of the evil. It is the nursery in which it is reared—in which it spreads its roots, shoots forth its branches, and is prepared to yield its bitter fruits. As well might you expect, by pouring oil on the flame, to quench its violence, as by moderate drinking to arrest the progress of Intemperance. If this plan had never been tried, some hope of its success might have been entertained ; but, weighed in the balance of long and invariable experience, it is found wanting. By its results, the only certain criterion of efficiency, let us estimate the value of moderate drinking, as a remedy for intemperance. Has it ever effectually opposed this vice ? Has it

not rather given it life, vigour and activity ? We may safely affirm that a large proportion of moderate drinkers have become, and are constantly becoming, drunkards ; and, that no man ever became a drunkard who was not previously a moderate drinker. Would you, then, pursue a path in which many had been destroyed, when you might follow one in which all had gone safely ? Would you, by moderate drinking, expose yourself to the danger of eventual ruin, while by practising Total Abstinence you would incur no risk ?

By far the greater part of those articles which are generally used for food or drink, produce no feverish appetite, or unnatural desire. Bread or milk, however long they may be used, have no tendency to create any ungovernable craving. The use of some other substances, however, has an opposite effect. The person who chews or smokes tobacco is apt to acquire a relish for it which can be overcome only by great self-denial. To this class of substances belong all intoxicating liquors. By their frequent use an appetite is produced which is resisted with extreme difficulty ; and hence, till a change takes place in the nature of things, moderate drinking must produce intemperance.

The plan for arresting intemperance which we would recommend is—Abstinence from all that intoxicates. We do not affirm that, considered in itself, the use of intoxicating liquors is unlawful, nor do we assert that it is absolutely forbidden in the Scriptures. We think that, on this point, some of the friends of Temperance allow their zeal to outstrip their discretion, and by proceeding too far, injure, rather than promote, the cause which they advocate.

This assertion will, perhaps, lead some to accuse us of hostility to the cause of Temperance. To this we would answer, that the best causes are seriously injured by the use of arguments which cannot be maintained. When an argument is discovered to be weak, many immediately conclude that the cause in favour of which it is adduced, is bad ; even while it may be supported by other evidence that is irresistible. While, however, we believe the use of intoxicating liquors is not forbidden in the Bible, we believe that Total Abstinence Societies, when rightly constituted, rest on a Scriptural basis. To this basis we shall now turn your attention.

Many persons consider entire Abstinence unscriptural, because it is nowhere expressly commanded. We admit the premises, but deny the conclusion. Our duty is not limited to those things which are expressly enjoined or prohibited. There is no precept that women should communicate, and shall we, therefore, exclude them from the ordinance of the Supper. Our Confession of Faith recognizes legitimate inference as no less binding than express injunction. Let us see, then, how far it is a legitimate inference from the word of God, that we should abstain from customary drinking. As a guide to the interpretation of scripture, this principle is always held by Divines, that when any sin is forbidden, every thing which leads to it is also virtually prohibited. This will be made plain by an example. The command, "thou shalt not steal," not only forbids actual theft, but also idleness, which would reduce us to poverty, and expose us to the temptation to steal. Now, if all that leads to intemperance be prohibited, when we are forbidden to be drunk; moderate drinking, its most prolific source, must be a violation of the Divine Law.

It has been asserted, also, that it is unlawful to abstain from intoxicating liquors because every creature of God is good, and, therefore, not to be refused. We do not deny that God's creatures are good, nor will we say, with some, that alcohol is a creature of the Devil. But the creatures of God are good, only for the particular uses for which they were designed; and while, for such uses they should not be rejected, they are not good for every purpose. Poison is not good for daily food, nor are intoxicating liquors good for customary drinking. Nor is it always wrong for us to abstain from a thing, the use of which is in itself lawful.—The Apostle says, that in some circumstances, it is good not to eat meat. Granting, then, that the use of these liquors is not unlawful, abstinence from them may sometimes be justifiable.

Nay, we may even proceed a step further. There may be circumstances in which it may even be our *duty* to abstain from that which may be in itself lawful. Of this we have an illustration in the 8th Chapter of the 1st Corinthians. The heathen were accustomed to offer to their idols sheep, oxen, and other animals fit for food. Of these, part was consumed on the altars; and the remainder divided among the worshippers, who feasted on it, in-

viting their friends to the entertainment, either in the idol's temple, or in their own houses. It appears that, as to the lawfulness of this practice, the Corinthians had requested the advice of the Apostle. In his answer he admits that an idol is nothing in the world, that it cannot change the nature of the meats offered to it, and that, in eating them, there was nothing sinful, considered in itself. But every one did not possess this knowledge. Some, who were not fully instructed in their Christian liberty, would eat this meat with some superstitious veneration for the idol; and their consciences would thus be defiled. The Apostle, therefore, warns the Corinthians that, if they used the liberty of eating meats which had been offered to idols, others, who were less fully instructed, would be emboldened, by their example, to do so also, with veneration of the idol. In this case they would wound the consciences of their weak brethren, and thus sin against Christ.—“Wherefore,” he says, “if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”

It is evident, then, that when our example becomes the means of leading others into sin, it is improper to do that which is in itself lawful. But who does not see that this is the case as regards the practice of drinking. Has it not lead many to intemperance? Look around you in the world, and cast your eyes on some of the victims of intemperance. You will be at no loss for examples.—These, alas! are lamentably numerous—so numerous, that they who have never attempted to calculate the amount, would, if it could be stated to them, reject it as incredible. Were those persons born drunkards? Had they a natural appetite for intoxicating liquors? Has there not been a period in their history when they were sober men, and when they would have been offended, if you had even insinuated that they would become drunkards.—But they did not wholly renounce the liquid poison. They partook of a little of the intoxicating liquid. At first they had no particular relish for it, but, by frequent use, an appetite was produced. This, by degrees, became stronger and stronger; while their powers of resistance became less and less. The moderate drinker is like the vessel that approaches the destroying whirlpool. At first its influences are slightly felt. As she draws nigh, the

the attraction increases. At first a comparatively small effort might have withdrawn her from the sphere of its influence. But while this is not made, escape becomes more difficult, and at length impossible. Just so is it in moderate drinking. The longer we persevere in it, the stronger and more enslaving our attachment to intoxicating liquor becomes, till at length we are the victims of intemperance. Moderate drinking, then, is the path which leads to drunkenness. Nay, more, it is the only path,—the only school for educating the drunkard. He who indulges in it countenances a practice which has led vast numbers to ruin. Is it possible for those who are the followers of Christ, to persist in such a course consistently with their profession? Will they not so far practice self-denial as to abstain from intoxicating liquors, that their example may not lead their fellow creatures to transgress? So far is Total Abstinence from being contrary to Scripture, that in some cases it is demanded by Divine Authority. It is founded on the great law of Christian self-denial.

If any of us should see a fellow creature about to sink into the waters of the ocean, and not attempt to rescue him, would he be guiltless? If one of us should perceive a man in danger of being torn to pieces by a furious wild beast, without endeavouring to deliver him from his perilous situation, would he be innocent?—If we should be aware that a person was pursuing a path that was likely to lead him to ruin, would it not be our duty to strive to arrest his progress? And if multitudes, by the customary use of intoxicating liquors, are exposing themselves to the risk of ruin, shall we make no efforts to turn them from the fatal path? To accomplish an object so desirable, is it too much to make the trifling sacrifice of abstaining from intoxicating liquors? Hear the language of inspiration. “If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and them that are ready to be slain:—if thou sayest, behold we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it; and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it; and shall he not render to every man according to his work.”

Some persons seem to think that they are under no obligations to promote the welfare of their fellow-creatures. When any course of action is proposed to them, their sole enquiry is, how it will be of service to themselves. If it be not personally advanta-

geous, they cannot be induced to embark in it. Like Cain, they are disposed to ask, "am I my brother's keeper." But Christianity breathes a different spirit. It glows with social tenderness, and feels for all mankind. It commands us not to look every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. It requires every man to be the guardian of his brother. In every way it is the reverse of selfishness, and breathes a generous and disinterested spirit. Professing to be Christians, then, shall we not show that we are animated by the spirit of Christianity. If we should manifest an ardent desire, in every possible way, to promote human happiness, shall we not, when the welfare of our fellow men requires it, cheerfully abstain from intoxicating liquors? We are commanded to abstain from all appearance of evil. In the Scriptures, the term *evil* has two meanings, denoting either affliction, which is natural evil, or sin, which is moral evil. Here it is used in the latter sense. It is unnecessary to prove that the Scriptures forbid all sin. This will at once be admitted. But the command goes further. It enjoins us to abstain, not only from evil, but from the very appearance of evil. It not only forbids sin, but also everything which may incite to sin. Surely, then, the injunction strikes at the practice of moderate drinking. That Drunkenness is a sin, and to be avoided, will be granted even by the opponents of Total Abstinence. But if we would act up to the spirit of the Divine Law, we must shun every thing that would operate as an incitement to intemperance. Of this nature is customary drinking; for it is a practice in which we cannot indulge, without exposing ourselves to the danger of eventually becoming drunkards.

We are taught to pray, "lead us not into temptation." Temptation here denotes enticement to sin. To all men this is dangerous, and we can be preserved from it by God alone. Deliverance from temptation, however, is to be expected only in the way of asking. How important, therefore, is the prayer, lead us not into temptation. But our conduct should ever correspond with our prayers. How inconsistent is it to implore God to deliver us from incitements to sin, while we are wilfully placing ourselves in their way. In such circumstances, can we expect an answer to our prayers? If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not

hear me. This, however, is the conduct of the person who prays, "Lead me not into temptation," while by the customary use of intoxicating liquors, he is constantly exposing himself to the danger of becoming a drunkard.

Some persons aver that the use of intoxicating liquors has improved their health, and that to renounce it would, for them at least, be wrong. We apprehend that the utility of such a beverage is more imaginary than real. By whom is the testimony in its favour afforded? Is it not chiefly by persons whom some degree of relish created by long use, has made very partial witnesses? But, even if we admit that testimony has been given by some who have contracted no relish for it, we reply, that they have never tried the practice of total abstinence. They have examined only one side of the subject. Their experiments have not been sufficiently extensive, nor their induction of particulars complete; and, therefore, the evidence which they have collected, is not sufficient to conduct them to a correct conclusion. On this point, they are best qualified to judge correctly who have tried both moderate drinking and entire abstinence. Let us hear some of them. The Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham, declares that he had tried abstinence for two years, had endured much ministerial labour, and could aver that he had never laboured with so much comfort, as since he had rigidly adhered to that principle. The Rev. W. Jay, of Bath, says, "For the last six years I have been a teetotaller. To this (now I am past 70,) I ascribe, under God, the glow of health, evenness of spirit, freshness of feeling, ease of application, and comparative inexhaustion by public labour, which I now enjoy. The subject of teetotalism I have examined physically, morally and christianly; and, after all my reading, reflection, observation and experience, I have reached a very firm and powerful conviction. I believe that, next to the glorious gospel, God could not bless the human race so much as by the abolition of all intoxicating liquors."

By what is called the moderate use of intoxicating liquors there is incurred *a useless waste of property*. No person who has not made the calculation would imagine how large an amount of property is consumed in this way. The sums expended, individually considered, may indeed be small, but in the aggregate, they make a

large amount. And how foolish to expend our property to so useless a purpose ! How many are the demands upon us for the accomplishment of the most valuable ends ! Never was there a time when there were more claims upon our liberality. Young men are to be educated for the ministry, domestic missions are to be promoted, weak congregations are to be assisted, missionaries are to be sent to heathen lands, and the word of life to be placed in every hand. For these purposes great expenditure is necessary. Shall we, then, waste, in the purchase of intoxicating liquors, that property which is required for the promotion of so many valuable objects ? Let us remember that our property is not our own.—We are Stewards. For the talents committed to us we are responsible to God, and soon we must give an account of our Stewardship ; and how will we answer for the use of that property which has been expended in the use of intoxicating liquors ? Can we plead that it has been for the glory of God, the good of our fellow-creatures, or for our own improvement in any way ?

The plan which we would earnestly urge upon you is—*Total Abstinence*. This is an effectual remedy. Let it be adopted by all, and intemperance will cease from our land. And surely it is a practicable plan. Surely there is among us sufficient piety, sufficient regard for our fellow-men, sufficient self-denial, sufficient compassion for the perishing, to lead us to submit to the trifling sacrifice. “ There is, says the Rev. Baptist W. Noel, no zeal, no faithfulness, no pity, if we can see the wicked die, and refuse to save them. If a man were placed among a spirit-drinking population, where he saw thousands hurried down to death by that vice, it would be his plain undeniable duty to abstain. If we, as the disciples of Christ, are really anxious to convey blessings to the degraded, we must, we are absolutely bound, to set them an example in this matter.”

Many, however, declare their willingness to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors, who refuse to connect themselves with Temperance Societies. But if abstinence be right for the individual, we do not see that the action is vitiated by entering into an association with others. Is it not an accredited maxim that “ *Union is Power* ?” Is not our example in this way rendered more efficacious ? Nor should it be overlooked that the method

which God has employed for the propagation of his own cause in the world is by association. It is not enough that we profess our faith in Christ individually; we must connect ourselves with the Church of Christ, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

It may be said, however, that we are not commanded in the holy Scriptures to form Temperance Societies. Neither are we commanded to form Bible and Missionary and Tract Societies.—These institutions, however, are evidently in accordance with the spirit of Christianity; and we apprehend that the same may be said of Temperance Societies.

That many violate their pledge is also adduced as an objection to these institutions. We freely admit the fact. We deeply lament that many who have connected themselves with these Societies have returned to the paths of intemperance. But while we admit the fact, we deny that it forms a valid objection to the temperance movement. Do not many who connect themselves with the Christian Church also act contrary to their profession? Shall we say that it is wrong on this account to unite in Church fellowship with the professed followers of our Saviour?

We repeat, then, that the plan which we would recommend is total abstinence from all that intoxicates. Many and weighty are the considerations which call for the adoption of this course. *The good of individuals* demands it. No person who persists in the customary use of intoxicating drinks is absolutely safe. He is, at least, in some degree of danger. He may, indeed, flatter himself that he is in perfect safety—he may laugh at the apprehensions of others respecting him. But many who once considered themselves as secure as he, have fallen before intemperance. None can continue the habitual use of intoxicating liquors without running some degree of risk? Is it not, then, the part of wisdom to choose that course which he may pursue with perfect safety?

The good of families demands the adoption of this course. Who can calculate the miseries which intemperance has introduced into the domestic circle? Who can delineate the agonies and the sighs and the tears of which it has been the prolific source? How many have been the parents, whose gray hairs have been brought down in sorrow to the grave, through the drunkenness of their

children ? How many children have been subjected to intolerable mortification, through the drunkenness of their parents ? How many have been deprived of the means of education, of subsistence, and of comfort, which they might have enjoyed, had their parents maintained habits of sobriety ? How many wives have been broken-hearted through the intemperance of their husbands ? What discord, what contention, what misery has this vice occasioned in families ? Does not the good of the domestic circle then require that we should scrupulously avoid the causes which would lead to such unhappy results ?

The good of Society requires the adoption of this course. Society is composed of individuals. Its prosperity must, therefore, always correspond with that of the individuals of whom it is constituted. As the many or the few act their part well or ill, so will it be more or less prosperous. In any society, then, a number of individuals given to intemperance must be a serious drawback upon the prosperity of the whole body. That this vice has inflicted the most grievous calamities upon society is sufficiently apparent. We have only to look around us and to behold its ravages. We have only to open our eyes that we may contemplate its terrible devastations. What poverty, what disease, what crime, what bloodshed has it occasioned ! Has it not turned society into a valley of Bochim, a place of weeping ? Does not the good of society, then, require the practice of total abstinence ?

The good of the Church requires the adoption of this course. The Church has suffered much from intemperance. Ah ! how many who once gave promising indications of piety have been cut down by this vice ! Nor have the ravages been limited to the members of the Church. They have been too painfully evident among the office bearers. Not a few of these have fallen before the enemy.—The evil has intruded itself into the sacred desk. It has polluted those who have filled the hallowed office of the ministry. It has tarnished the purity of those who bear the vessels of the Lord. Shall we then continue to indulge in that which has proved so injurious to the interests of the Church, and which continues to weigh so heavily as a dead weight upon her energies ? Shall we not adopt that course by which the evils of intemperance may be prevented from assailing her ? Surely the peace and prosperity of Zion are motives which

must appeal to the hearts of all who love her. And surely we shall not refuse to choose and to follow that course which the good of individuals, of families, of society and of the Church requires.

It is especially incumbent on those who profess to be the followers of the Saviour to practice entire abstinence. The Church is "a city set on an hill which cannot be hid." She is a conspicuous object. All her movements are carefully scrutinized by the world. Her example is influential, and must have a salutary effect or the contrary according to its nature. The course which she pursues, with regard to the temperance cause, is surely then of very great importance. It is certainly her duty to be foremost in the suppression of the vice of intemperance. Shall she not show herself to be animated by the spirit of her Great Master? Has Jesus made so great sacrifices to save us from ruin, and shall we, who profess to be his followers, to appreciate his love and to possess his spirit, refuse to make the trifling sacrifice of abstaining from intoxicating liquors to rescue our neighbors, our friends, our brethren.

The office bearers in the Church have much in their power. From the position which they occupy, their influence and example will be peculiarly felt. To them the private members of the Church naturally look for direction and also for example. They have, therefore, great responsibility because they have much in their power for advancing or hindering the cause of temperance. Should they countenance the use of liquors which produce inebriety, their conduct will be likely to have a very pernicious influence upon the private members of the Church. But on the other hand, should they sanction, by example and influence, the total abstinence principle, the happiest results are likely to follow. To the Elders of our Churches, therefore, we would earnestly and affectionately, though respectfully, say, consider seriously the course which you are pursuing. Are you lending your countenance to temperance or to intemperance? If you have reflected on the dreadful evils of intemperance, surely you will not only be willing, but most anxious, to lend your aid to every legitimate plan for the suppression of this vice. Surely you will not only practice abstinence yourselves, but strive earnestly to persuade those under your inspection to adopt the same course. Set over them in the Lord, watching over them as they that must give account, will you not

employ every legitimate method to prevent them from entering the fatal path themselves, or setting an example which might betray others into it ?

But even the *private members of the Church* are peculiarly obligated to practice total abstinence. They should recommend the religion which they profess by discountenancing every thing that leads to vice. We do not conceal from you that it is our earnest desire that all who bear the name of Christian should practice total abstinence. We might, indeed, be bold to enjoin you to pursue this course, but for love's sake, we beseech you. The circumstances in which we are placed loudly call upon you thus to act. The inexpressible miseries which intemperance has every where spread around, demand this act of self-denial. Where is our compassion for our fellow-creature, if we can see them perish rather than deny ourselves the use of a little intoxicating liquor ? Are we told on the highest authority that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, and shall we not make,—shall we hesitate to make—this trifling sacrifice ?

